



U.S. Department of Justice

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United States Attorney Craig S. Morford announced that a jury that had deliberated approximately 3 hours returned guilty verdicts against Chanh Chan Lao, a resident of Toronto, Canada for various violations of federal drug laws.

The six-day trial was conducted before United States District Judge David M. Lawson in Bay City, Michigan.

Assistant United States Attorney Michael Hluchaniuk, who prosecuted the case, said that, "The evidence presented at trial established that Mr. Lao caused the importation of over 600,000 ecstasy tablets between 1999 and 2003 into Michigan from Canada. These ecstasy tablets were then distributed in various locations in Michigan, including the Alpena area.

Assistant United States Attorney Hluchaniuk added that "Sentencing of Mr. Lao was scheduled by Judge Lawson for February of 2005. Based on the verdicts returned by the jury, Mr. Lao faces a minimum of 30 years in prison and a fine. The sentence will be imposed under the United States Sentence Guidelines according to the nature of the offense and the criminal background, if any, of the defendant.

I commend the efforts of the Immigration Customs Enforcement Agency along with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and Canadian Customs for their hard work and dedication to this case", stated U.S. Attorney Craig S. Morford. "Yesterday's guilty verdict demonstrates how the coordination of law enforcement resources and intelligence is crucial in combating drug trafficking."

Assistant United States Attorney Hluchaniuk stated that, "Mr. Lao has been detained since his arrest in September of 2003 and the detention was continued following his arrest.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Huron Undercover Narcotics

Team (HUNT).